

Your Drums

PART 4

with Ben Stone

Welcome back to your regular drumming workshop. So you want to drum faster and longer, do you? If so, you're in the right place, for in this instalment I'll be explaining how, with the help of the TD-3's rhythm coach and a few classic tunes, greater speed and endurance could soon be yours

For many novice drummers, patience most certainly *isn't* a virtue. From the moment they get their hands on their first pair of drumsticks, all they want to do is drum fast – and the sooner they're good enough to play at 100mph, the better.

The trouble is, speed is one of the last skills that drummers should develop. Why? Well, in order to play at any tempo, you first need control. You also need to be able to play with accuracy and feel. If you don't take the time to nurture these basic talents, you'll forever be stuck in the slow lane of the drumming world.

So, if you're absolutely determined to up

the pace of your drumming, first take a look back over previous instalments of Your V-Drums, and in particular the basic rudiments from exercises 1, 2, 3, and 11. These should already be familiar to you and also be part of your warm-up routine.

To start with, try the single stroke roll (exercise 1, part 1). First, select your start tempo on the TD-3 by pressing TEMPO, then increase/decrease using the [+] or [-] buttons. You can test the tempo by pressing CLICK.

When you're happy with the tempo, press COACH repeatedly until 'Gud' is displayed. This enables you to gradually increase the tempo automatically and is

ideal for practising patterns at speed. Press CLICK to start the program.

Keep a record of your maximum speeds for exercises 1, 2, 3 and 11, and try to increase them over time without causing discomfort. Practising these rudiments slowly will mean that you have more control, and in time the speed will develop at a pace that's right for you.

Being able to drum fast for five minutes is one thing; the ability to maintain the tempo for a two-hour set is quite another. So how do you prevent blisters and cramp setting in after two songs, leaving you with nothing to give for the rest of the show?

One way to improve your endurance is

to use the step up/down program in the TD-3's rhythm coach. This little practice program allows you to play for extended periods of time at different tempos, both fast and slow. You can choose what to play based on any of the exercises you'll have practised over the last three issues, or you can improvise. In fact, it doesn't really matter what you play – what's important is that you are on the drum throne playing for extended periods of time. Doing so will strengthen your hands, arms and feet, it will help you keep good time through the different tempos, and it will give you the endurance you need to stay relaxed even when the going gets tough.

Select your start tempo on the TD-3 by pressing TEMPO. Then increase/decrease using the [+] or [-] buttons. You can test the tempo by pressing the CLICK button.

When you're happy with the tempo, press COACH repeatedly until 'Sud' appears in the display. When you're ready to start the program, press the CLICK button and away you go.

Warm up and take it easy

When practising endurance playing, it's important not to overdo it, and make sure you warm up. Warm-ups should include light stretches for upper and lower body and gentle rudiments for at least 10 minutes. As a guide, and depending on your experience and ability with the drums, practise for five minutes at a time to start, and work your way up to a point where you feel comfortable.

One of the things I've always loved to do is play along with my favourite CDs, as this is a great way of getting to understand different

grooves and feels. Short of playing with other musicians, I can think of nothing more pleasing than rocking out with your favourite bands in your own imaginary Madison Square Gardens or Wembley Stadium (when it's finished, that is!)

All the kits in the V-Drums range incorporate what we call a mix input, which is a simple stereo input ready to have a CD, MP3, MD or, if you still have one, a cassette player attached to it. What this actually means is that you can access your entire record collection via your V-Drums set. All that's left to do is play away for as long as you have the energy!

Here are some of the songs I really enjoy playing along to. They might not all be to your taste, but if you're after some great groove playing, technical bits and just darn good song writing, you could do a lot worse than give them a try:

Haitian Divorce – Steely Dan
 Time Out Of Mind – Steely Dan
 Higher Ground – Stevie Wonder
 5:15 – The Who
 Rosanna – Toto
 Spirits in the Material World – The Police
 Us and Them – Pink Floyd
 Everybody Loves You Now – Billy Joel
 Lido Shuffle – Boz Scaggs
 New Killer Star – David Bowie
 Just For Love – ELO
 Night & Day – Frank Sinatra
 Wot Gorilla – Genesis
 Dodo / Lurker – Genesis
 Clever Trevor – Ian Dury & the Blockheads
 Country Road – James Taylor
 Babooshka – Kate Bush
 My Sharona – The Knack
 I Keep Forgetting – Michael McDonald
 Live and Let Die – Paul McCartney & Wings
 I Am Animal – Pete Townsend
 Give Blood – Pete Townsend
 Red Rain – Peter Gabriel
 Fury – Prince
 Seven Seas of Rhye – Queen
 While My Guitar Gently Weeps – The Beatles

TIP:

Always ensure that your breathing remains constant and relaxed. This will really help you stay calm, play in time and not rush things too much – especially when you're drumming for extended periods.

V-DRUMS

Groove variations

As we've already looked at some basic rock grooves over the last few issues, the time has now come for some interesting variations on what is deemed a relatively simple groove.

The basic rock groove has many variations depending on the music and, of course, who is playing it. What I've done for the following exercises is just to map out a few of the variations in the hope that once you've mastered these you can go on and elaborate further as time goes by.

Exercise 19 is a basic rock groove with some subtle accents played on the hi-hats. It's counted like 1, and 2, and 3, and 4, and... with the accent on the 'AND'. To play the accent, use the shoulder of the stick on the edge of the hi-hat and for the quieter beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, play the top of the hi-hat with the tip of the stick.

Play it like Led Zep

Exercise 20 deals with a 16th note rock groove, which can be played either with two hands on the hi-hat or with one – it really depends on the tempo and what kind of feel you want to get. By playing the exercise with two hands you will hear that it sounds a lot more powerful, whereas if you play it with one hand it sounds a little more 'Motown'. You can play this kind of groove like rock, with slightly opened hi-hats – or keep the hi-hats tight

POWER ON 16

TD3KW/ Yor V-Drums Notation - 4th Lesson Ben Stone music

KEY

SNARE DRUM	TOM 1	TOM 3	CLOSED HI HAT	FOOT HI HAT	CRASH CYMBAL
BASS DRUM	RIM SHOT	TOM 2	GHOST NOTE	OPEN HI HAT	RIDE CYMBAL
					X-STICK

NOTE VALUES

4 BEATS (SEMI BREVE)	2 BEATS (MINIM)	1 BEAT (CROCHET)	1/2 BEAT (QUAVER)	1/4 BEAT (SEMI QUAVER)
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Ex 19 Rock Rhythm Variations

Ex 20 Rock Rhythm Variations

Ex 21 Rock Rhythm Variations

Ex 22 Rock Rhythm Variations

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for a precise feel.

Exercise 21 reminds me of the fantastic drumming of John Bonham on Led Zeppelin's *Kashmir*, but with an extra little 16th note bass drum beat. Again there are some slight accents on the hi-hats in the exercise, and these are really important as

TIP:

As soon as the program gets to a tempo that is uncomfortable, stop and check the screen for the current tempo. This will give you an indication of how fast you can comfortably practise the rudiment.

they impart a strong focus on the down beat. For the second part of exercise 21, the hi-hat switches accents to the 'AND' and is counted just like exercise 19.

Exercise 22 is the last in the rock groove exercises and can be played as strong as you like. The real trick with this, or indeed any rock groove, is to really nail the timing so it feels solid even when the hi-hats are open. This exercise has a little bass drum beat just before the third beat of the bar; this can be played a little softer than the main beats 1 and 3.

All of the above exercises can be practised with the TD-3's rhythm coach

functions: Time Check and Quiet Count.

The one thing I would say about practice is that even if you don't have much time, try to do a little bit every day. If, however, you have a lot of time, try and practise all the time. Remember, practice makes perfect and maybe one day you'll be good enough to take over the world!

Unfortunately, that's all for now folks as I need to go and practise myself – after all, I wouldn't want to run out of energy halfway through my next gig, would I? ■

Ben Stone is Roland UK's V-Drums trainer and demonstrator

